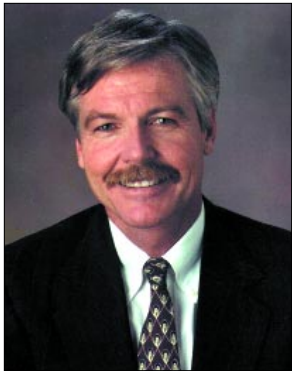


MESSAGE FROM THE STATE BOARD CHAIR



Arthur G. Baggett, Jr., Chair

We are fortunate to live and work in one of the most diverse and beautiful ecosystems on earth. We are also charged with the awesome responsibility of protecting, preserving and restoring what is arguably the foundation of our great state: the waters. Millions of visitors come to swim and recreate on our shores. Arctic terns, blue whales and countless terrestrial species depend on our coastal waters, wetlands and lakes as they travel the globe. The world relies on the bounties of our farms, software of our valleys, and technical advances from our universities. Water resource issues are more complex than ever, involving stakeholders from federal and state government, local agencies, agriculture, industry and non-profit organizations.

We, and our predecessors at the Water Boards, have built a reputation for running one of the most effective water quality programs on the planet. The legal, scientific, and technical experience and expertise we have developed is a great foundation. This Strategic Plan then, provides a blueprint upon which to build our organization to meet the demands that the 21st century will place on us as stewards of California's waters.

We developed this Plan based on input and feedback from our key constituents. State and Regional Board Members, management and staff; representatives from environmental and regulated communities, and those interested in water rights issues; Cal/EPA and its Boards, Departments and Office; Departments of Forestry and Fire Protection, Water Resources, Fish and Game, Food and Agriculture; and CalFED were all active participants. We will now pursue with these stakeholders collaborative and innovative approaches that ensure we successfully address the water quality and water rights issues identified in this Plan. This broader perspective will require us to develop cross-media and cross-organizational strategies that will achieve even more significant environmental gains in California's watersheds.

This Plan does not encompass everything we do. Rather, it focuses on critical strategic activities that will help us effectively position the organization for the future as well as guide our decision-making and prioritization of resources. Just like a good basin plan, it is a living document that will be periodically evaluated and modified with an eye toward the goal of beneficial uses of our waters.

I would like to thank everyone involved in developing this Plan, as well as those who will be responsible for turning it into action at both the Regional and Statewide levels. I strongly encourage you to read what follows as a guide to our world at the Water Boards, but always remember the real work is out there in the waters of the bays, estuaries, rivers, and lakes that we are charged with protecting, preserving and restoring. As a philosopher once said, "We are faced with insurmountable opportunities". Thanks again for your hard work and dedication and I look forward to your joint efforts to turn those opportunities into realities. Together we are making a difference.

Arthur G. Baggett, Jr.
Chair, State Water Resources Control Board